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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the growing problem of high school absenteeism and presents data gathered in a study of student attendance in a large Connecticut high school. Included are graphs displaying schoolwide patterns of absenteeism and a number of statistical tables containing attendance data related to such factors as student age, class, sex, race, religion, I.Q. score, personality rating, and home environment. The author briefly discusses major findings and implications of the Connecticut study and recommends three specific steps to combat rising absenteeism: adoption of a firm and well-publicized attendance policy based on the "no work-no pay" concept, development of an effective reporting system to regularly inform parents of student absences, and implementation of an alternative curriculum for chronic absentees. (Author/JG)

ED102723

The following presentation was made at the 59th Annual Convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, held February 7 - 12, 1975 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

(Parts of this presentation were extracted from the author's doctoral dissertation entitled "The Identification and Analysis of Factors Related to Secondary School Absenteeism" The University of Connecticut, 1973.)

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# THE PROBLEM OF ATTENDANCE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND SOLUTIONS

Speaker: Joseph Levanto, Ph.D.

The Norwich Free Academy
Norwich, Connecticut

HIGH SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM HAS BEEN INCREASING IN RECENT YEARS AND IT HAS BECOME A MATTER THAT IS OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO MANY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITIES. THIS BECOMES APPARENT WHENEVER HIGH SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM BECOMES A TOPIC OF DISCUSSION. INDICATIONS ARE THAT EFFORTS BY SCHOOLS TO RESTRAIN THE RISING TIDE OF ABSENTEEISM AND TO ENFORCE THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE STRUCTURE HAVE PROVEN TO BE INEFFECTIVE. ALSO, A CONSIDERABLE AND COSTLY AMOUNT OF TIME AND EFFORT ARE EXPENDED BY MANY HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE AND STAFF PERSONNEL IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN A "CONTROL" OF THE ABSENTEE PROBLEM AND TO PREVENT A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE SCHOOL'S REGULATED ATTENDANCE STRUCTURE.

SEVERAL FACTORS APPEAR TO INFLUENCE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON, AND/OR RELATED TO, SOCIAL FORCES, HOME AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, THE APPEAL OF SCHOOL PROGRAMS, TEACHERS, AND PEER PRESSURES. THESE FACTORS AND OTHERS NEED TO BE IDEN-

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TIFIED BEFORE THE REASONS UNDERLYING POOR ATTENDANCE CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AND BEFORE REMEDIAL PROCEDURES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY INITIATED. TODAY, MANY HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ARE OPENLY CONCERNED WITH RISING ABSENTEEISM AND ITS COMPLEX IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. THE PROBLEM OF INCREASING ABSENTEEISM, FOR SOME SCHOOLS, HAS BECOME THEIR NUMBER-ONE PROBLEM. UNTIL RECENTLY, LITTLE RESEARCH COULD BE FOUND DEALING WITH THE NEW AND RECENT TREND TOWARDS POOR ATTENDANCE. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU A STUDY OF ABSENTEEISM UNDERTAKEN AT A LARGE CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL. THE STUDY CONCERNED ITSELF WITH THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEMATIC METHOD FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO ABSENTEEISM. THE PROCEDURE DEVELOPED PERMITTED THE ANALYSIS OF MASS ABSENTEE DATA. THE BASIC SOURCES OF DATA FOR THE STUDY WERE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT RECORDS CONTAINING THE USUAL INFORMATION GENERATED BY MOST SCHOOLS, AS WELL AS INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE STUDENT RELAIED TO HIS HOME ENVIRONMENT. ATTENDANCE DATA, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRADES, AND PERSONAL INFORMATION ON STUDENTS ENROLLED DURING AN ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR WERE INPUTS INTO A COMPUTER SYSTEM THAT PRODUCED A VARIETY OF FREQUENCY TABLES AND GRAPHS AS OUTPUT. GRAPHS WERE DESIGNED TO DISPLAY SCHOOL PATTERNS OF ABSENTEEISM WHILE THE TABLES PRESENT DATA ON A VARIETY OF FACTORS: CLASS, SEX, AGE, TOWN OF RESIDENCE, PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT, NUMBER OF PARENTS LIVING AT HOME, I.Q. SCORES, PROGRAMS OF STUDY, SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, RACE, LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME, RELIGION, CLASS RANK, AND THE STUDENT'S PERSONALITY.

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FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STUDY, ABSENTEEISM IS DEFINED AS AN ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL DAY. IT SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH PERIOD OR CLASS CUTTING. NO DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN ABSENCES THAT ARE CONSIDERED EXCUSABLE BY THE SCHOOL AND THOSE CONSIDERED NOT EXCUSABLE. ALL ABSENCES RECORDED ARE TREATED EN MASSE IN THE STUDY. LET'S LOOK AT SOME GRAPHS AND FREQUENCY TABLES THAT WERE DEVELOPED:

(refer to attached graphs, frequency tables, summary tables, and findings)

DURING THE COURSE OF THE STUDY, IT WAS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT ESTIMATES, BY THE SCHOOL'S TWO HEALTH OFFICIALS, AS TO WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED A NORMAL ABSENTEE RATE (FOR STUDENTS NOT AFFLICTED WITH AN ILLNESS OF LONG DURATION OR AN INCAPACITATING INJURY) RANGED FROM 7 TO 9 SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO WOULD EXCEED THIS ESTIMATED NORMAL ABSENTEE RATE, BECAUSE OF LONG TERM ILLNESSES OR INCAPACITATING INJURIES WAS ESTIMATED AT LESS THAN 0.5 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ENROLLMENT.

USING THE 180 DAY SCHOOL YEAR AS A BASE, THE "NORMAL" ABSENTEE RATE OF 7 TO 9 DAYS TRANSLATES TO A 4-5% ABSENTEE RATE - A RATE NOT UNCOMMON TO HIGH SCHOOLS OF TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. TODAY, IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO HEAR RATES RANGING FROM 10% TO OVER 50% ABSENTEEISM. THIS INSIDIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS SHOULD BE OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO ALL OF US. THERE IS A MESSAGE IN THIS DEVELOPMENT. IT IS TIME TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO EXAMINE THOSE PRACTICES THAT MAY CONTRI-

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BUTE TO THE PROBLEM OF INCREASING ABSENTEEISM. IT SHOULD BE NOTED HERE THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE NOT TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE BLAME FOR INCREASING ABSENTEEISM. ATTENDANCE IS AND SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENTS AND STUDENTS. THOSE THAT ADVOCATE THAT LEARNING SHOULD BE FUN OR THAT INNOVATION BRINGS THE STUDENTS CRASHING THROUGH THE DOORS, ARE SADLY MISTAKEN. SERIOUS AND GOOD EDUCATION IS PLAIN HARD WORK.

SINCE HUMANS ARE APPARENTLY CREATURES OF HABIT, IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT PROPER WORK HABITS BE ESTABLISHED EARLY IN LIFE. SCHOOLS CAN AND SHOULD ASSIST AS A FORMATIVE INSTRUMENT IN THE PROCESS. GOOD ATTENDANCE HABITS LEARNED AND DEVELOPED IN SCHOOL HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING CARRIED OVER INTO THE WORLD OF WORK. THE SAME APPLIES TO BAD HABITS. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TODAY TO HEAR EMPLOYERS EXPRESS THEIR INCREASING CONCERN WITH THE ERRATIC ABSENTEEISM AMONG THE 20 TO 30 YEAR OLD WORKERS.

THE QUESTION FINALLY ARISES AS TO WHAT CAN WE, AS EDUCATORS, DO TO DEVELOP BETTER ATTENDANCE HABITS? ASSUMING THAT WHAT TAKES PLACE IN THE CLASSROOM IS A MEANINGFUL AND ESSENTIAL PART OF THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE, THEN WE CAN PROCEED TO MANDATE ATTENDANCE.

<u>FIRST</u>, AND PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT, <u>A FIRM</u>, FAIR, AND WELL PUBLICIZED ATTENDANCE POLICY MUST BE ADOPTED. EVERY STUDENT AND PARENT SHOULD KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR EARNING A CREDIT FOR A COURSE OF STUDY. THE "NO WORK - NO PAY" CONCEPT SHOULD PREVAIL.

<u>SECOND</u>, EFFECTIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES MUST BE DEVELOPED TO

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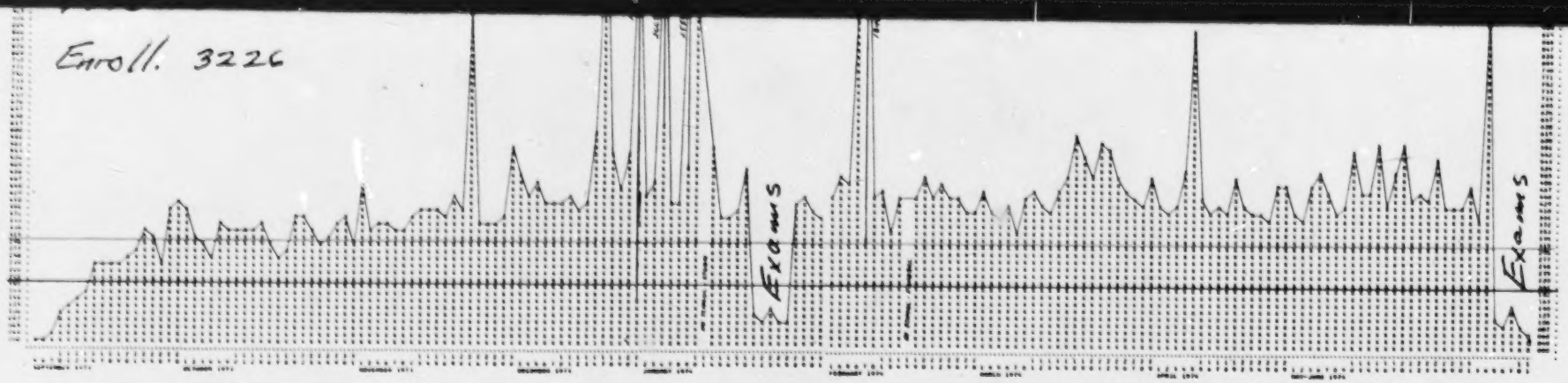
KEEP THE HOME INFORMED. A MAILING TO PARENTS AT THE END OF EACH W[illegible] IN WHICH AN ABSENCE HAS BEEN RECORDED COULD HELP. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ATTENDANCE MUST BE SHIFTED TO THE STUDENT AND HIS HOME.

THIRD, SCHOOLS SHOULD EXPLORE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN "ALTERNATIVE CURRICULA" FOR THE CHRONIC ABSENTEE. IF AND WHEN ABSENTEEISM RETURNS TO "NORMAL," THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE FEW WHO WILL CONTINUE TO STAY AWAY.

AT THIS POINT, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MORE MINUTES TO BRIEFLY OUTLINE AN ATTENDANCE P[illegible]LICY THAT WE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED. AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS POLICY IS ITS STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS:

(refer to copy of attendance policy)

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THESE THOUGHTS: TOO MUCH COSTLY "ADMINISTRATIVE TIME" IS SPENT ON ATTENDANCE RELATED MATTERS - THAT TIME COULD BETTER SERVE TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR THOSE WHO REALLY WANT IT. A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE IS LONG OVERDUE. SCHOOLS ARE EXPECTED TO BE TOO MANY THINGS TO TOO MANY PEOPLE. THE SCHOOL'S ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF RISING ABSENTEEISM MAY BE A SIMPLE ONE - HERE'S WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER, HERE'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET IT, - NO WORK - NO PAY.



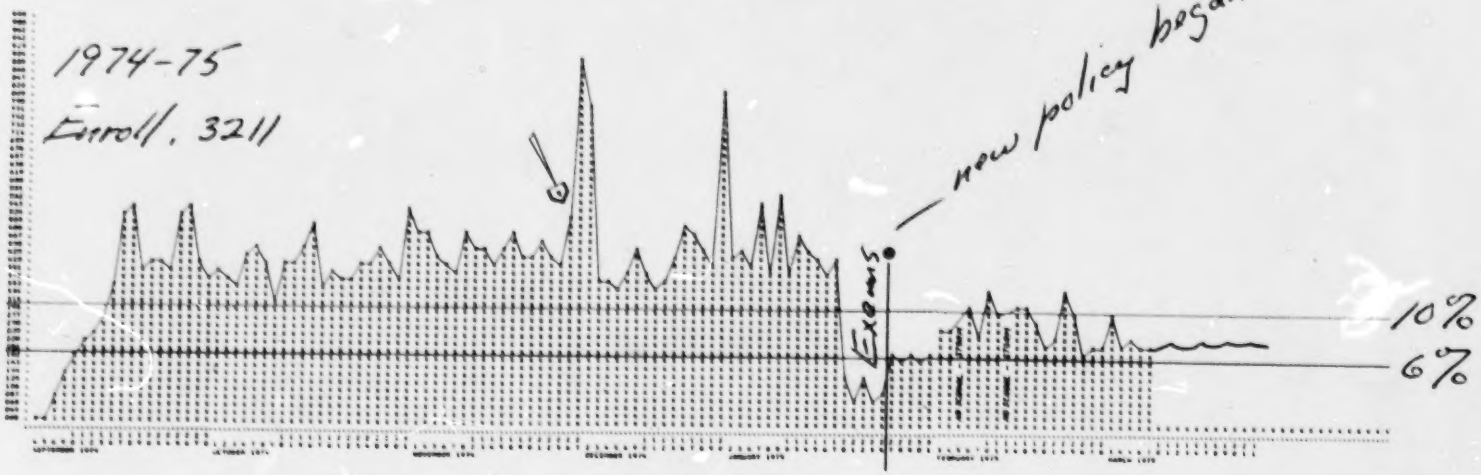




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TABLE 3.1

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY CLASS

(A Summary of Tables 5-8, Appendix B)

| Class | N* | Mean Days Absent | S.D.** | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9th | 812 | 17.5 | 19.04 | 41.7% |
| 10th | 717 | 17.9 | 17.53 | 39.4% |
| 11th | 719 | 19.2 | 16.37 | 31.9% |
| 12th | 646 | 21.3 | 16.23 | 24.6% |

* Number of students
** Standard Deviation

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TABLE 3.2

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY SEX AND CLASS

(A Summary of Tables 9-16, Appendix B)

| Class Sex | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9th Boys | 381 | 15.9 | 16.47 | 44.3% |
| 9th Girls | 431 | 18.9 | 20.97 | 39.4% |
| 10th Boys | 350 | 16.4 | 15.81 | 44.8% |
| 10th Girls | 367 | 19.4 | 18.95 | 34.3% |
| 11th Boys | 342 | 17.8 | 16.20 | 38.0% |
| 11th Girls | 377 | 20.4 | 16.46 | 26.2% |
| 12th Boys | 320 | 21.8 | 15.68 | 21.5% |
| 12th Girls | 326 | 20.9 | 16.76 | 27.6% |

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TABLE 3.3

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY AGE GROUPS

(A Summary of Tables 17-23, Appendix B)

| Age | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 4 | 13.0 | 8.52 | 25.0% |
| 13 | 234 | 13.3 | 12.82 | 50.0% |
| 14 | 684 | 17.7 | 19.74 | 42.7% |
| 15 | 735 | 18.0 | 16.69 | 35.1% |
| 16 | 709 | 19.9 | 16.59 | 31.2% |
| 17 | 446 | 21.6 | 16.65 | 22.6% |
| 18 | 68 | 27.7 | 19.36 | 25.0% |

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TABLE 3.4

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY TOWN OF RESIDENCE

(A Summary of Tables 24-31, Appendix B)

| Residence | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tuition | 28 | 11.9 | 13.32 | 57.2% |
| Town #1 (Sprague) | 120 | 17.1 | 18.33 | 38.3% |
| Town #2 (Salem) | 75 | 20.4 | 12.02 | 13.3% |
| Town #3 (Bozrah) | 112 | 19.3 | 15.47 | 33.1% |
| Town #4 (Lisbon) | 126 | 18.3 | 20.06 | 36.5% |
| Town #5 (Franklin) | 74 | 19.8 | 15.43 | 27.1% |
| Town #6 (Preston) | 243 | 19.2 | 17.12 | 30.5% |
| Town #7 (Norwich) | 2116 | 19.0 | 17.64 | 36.0% |

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TABLE 3.5

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT

(A Summary of Tables 32-34, Appendix B)

| Number Employed | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1575 | 18.5 | 17.20 | 36.2% |
| 2 | 1159 | 17.8 | 15.94 | 35.0% |
| 0 | 159 | 30.9 | 24.69 | 20.8% |

TABLE 3.6

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY NUMBER OF PARENTS AT HOME

(A Summary of Tables 35-38, Appendix B)

| Living With | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| One parent | 387 | 24.8 | 21.15 | 27.6% |
| Both parents | 2460 | 17.8 | 16.52 | 36.2% |
| Guardian | 40 | 22.2 | 18.68 | 27.5% |
| Married students | 6 | 47.0 | 22.57 | 00.0% |

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TABLE 3.7

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY I.Q. SCORES

(A Summary of Tables 39-45, Appendix B)

| I.Q. Scores | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - 69 | 15 | 26.5 | 25.75 | 20.0% |
| 70 - 79 | 71 | 25.0 | 20.01 | 25.4% |
| 80 - 89 | 228 | 26.7 | 20.56 | 18.4% |
| 90 - 109 | 1270 | 19.0 | 17.11 | 32.9% |
| 110 - 119 | 636 | 15.5 | 13.92 | 40.2% |
| 120 - 129 | 332 | 14.3 | 13.43 | 46.7% |
| 130 & up | 158 | 13.4 | 12.58 | 47.5% |

TABLE 3.8

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY PROGRAM OF STUDIES

(A Summary of Tables 46-48, Appendix B)

| Program | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| College | 1170 | 14.9 | 13.03 | 41.0% |
| Business | 357 | 22.6 | 17.78 | 22.4% |
| General | 555 | 26.8 | 19.75 | 20.0% |

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TABLE 3.10

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY RACE

(A Summary of Tables 81-84, Appendix B)

| Race | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 2786 | 18.7 | 17.45 | 35.3% |
| Black | 93 | 23.3 | 16.37 | 23.6% |
| Asiatic | 10 | 21.2 | 26.18 | 40.0% |
| American Indian | 5 | 17.8 | 10.71 | 40.0% |

TABLE 3.11

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME

(A Summary of Tables 85-86, Appendix B)

| Language | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 2548 | 18.8 | 17.54 | 35.0% |
| Other | 346 | 19.2 | 16.91 | 33.8% |

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TABLE 3.12

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY RELIGION

(A Summary of Tables 87-91, Appendix B)

| Religion | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catholic | 1743 | 18.5 | 17.30 | 35.5% |
| Protestant | 848 | 19.8 | 18.14 | 33.6% |
| Jewish | 130 | 15.7 | 12.25 | 40.8% |
| Other | 85 | 19.2 | 16.50 | 31.8% |
| None | 88 | 22.8 | 20.13 | 28.4% |

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TABLE 3.13

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY CLASS RANK*

(A Summary of Tables 92-101, Appendix B)

| Decile | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | 65 | 11.7 | 10.33 | 47.7% |
| 2nd | 62 | 14.6 | 10.84 | 37.1% |
| 3rd | 67 | 16.1 | 13.42 | 35.8% |
| 4th | 58 | 18.1 | 15.23 | 29.3% |
| 5th | 64 | 16.2 | 12.74 | 29.7% |
| 6th | 61 | 20.3 | 12.13 | 19.7% |
| 7th | 63 | 23.9 | 13.69 | 11.1% |
| 8th | 61 | 24.5 | 15.32 | 19.6% |
| 9th | 62 | 30.5 | 20.21 | 11.3% |
| 10th | 62 | 34.8 | 19.88 | 9.7% |

* 12th Grade class rank

TABLE 3.14

ABSENTEEISM - COMPARISON BY PERSONALITY RATINGS

(A Summary of Tables 102-111, Appendix B)

| Rating | Personal Responsibility | | | | Concern For Others | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days | N | Mean Days Absent | S.D. | Absent Less Than 10 Days |
| 1-1.99 | 37 | 51.8 | 35.74 | 2.7% | 31 | 41.9 | 29.54 | 6.4% |
| 2-2.99 | 325 | 31.7 | 21.18 | 12.9% | 283 | 28.3 | 22.61 | 19.8% |
| 3-3.99 | 1114 | 20.8 | 16.25 | 26.0% | 819 | 21.8 | 17.10 | 24.8% |
| 4-4.99 | 1155 | 12.4 | 11.49 | 50.2% | 1454 | 15.1 | 14.24 | 43.3% |
| 5.00 | 73 | 7.8 | 7.39 | 68.5% | 117 | 10.1 | 10.97 | 60.6% |



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THE NORWICH FREE ACADEMY

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

(effective January 27, 1975)

PHILOSOPHY

At the Academy, the learning experiences that take place in the classroom environment are considered to be a meaningful and essential part of its educational structure. Time loss from class is intrinsically irretrievable, particularly, in terms of opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas between students, student and teacher, and teacher and student. Therefore, classroom attendance is considered to be an integral part of the student's course of study.

GRADES AND COURSE CREDIT

Grades earned in any course shall reflect the student's daily attendance as well as the fulfillment of other academic requirements as may be established by the teacher. An academic penalty shall be assessed by the teacher for any unexcused absence in accordance with policy established by the school.

To earn credit in any course, a student is obligated to:

1. fulfill the course requirements as may be established by the teacher, and

2. not exceed the allowable limit of absences as established by the school's attendance policy.

ACADEMIC PENALTY FOR ABSENTEEISM/TARDINESS

All limits and penalties stated in the following regulations are for courses that meet four class periods weekly. Limits and penalties for classes meeting less than four periods weekly will be pro-rated accordingly.

... for SUBJECT CLASS ABSENCES

1. For every two (2) unexcused class absences during a grading period, the teacher shall lower the grade for that grading period one grade level (5 to a 4, 4 to a 3, etc.).

2. There shall be no academic penalty for an excused class absence, however, it is an absence that is counted toward the allowable limits established for the grading period/semester/ school year.

3. Any student who totals ten or more class absences during any one grading period shall receive a grade of 1 for that grading period.

   Note: a student may appeal to his housemaster for a waiver if it can be demonstrated that the absences were due to factors beyond the student's control, such as, absences due to verifiable medical reasons, death in the family, or a school sponsored activity. The housemaster may then allow the student to exceed the absence limits if it is evident that the work missed will be made-up.

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4. Any student who accumulates fifteen or more absences in a course during a semester shall receive a final grade of 1 for that semester. A final grade of 1 will be recorded for an accumulation of twenty-five or more absences in a course during a school year.

(The same appeal procedure noted in 3 above shall apply)

IMPORTANT NOTE - ANY CLASS TIME LOSS BECAUSE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION (suspension, etc.) WILL BE TREATED AS UNEXCUSED ABSENCES.

... for STUDY CLASS ABSENCES

An unexcused absence from a study class will be processed as follows:

FIRST absence - the student's home will be notified.

SECOND absence - will require conversational contact with the parent/s.

THIRD absence - the student will be sent home at the end of the school day to return with his parent/s for a conference with the housemaster during the next school day. (Any class time loss because of the required conference will be treated as unexcused absences.)

EACH absence thereafter will be a repeat of the procedure used for the THIRD absence stated above.

... for DETENTION ABSENCES

Whenever a student fails to report to an assigned after-school detention, and in the opinion of the teacher the student's excuse is unacceptable, the teacher shall treat the absence the same as an unexcused class absence. If the detention was assigned by the student's subject class teacher, the policy for subject class absences shall apply; if assigned by a study class teacher, the policy for study class absences shall apply.

... for TARDINESS TO CLASS

Teachers shall consider three (3) unexcused tardinesses to class during a grading period, the equivalent of one unexcused absence. The appropriate subject class or study class policy shall apply.

... for TARDINESS TO SCHOOL

The first unexcused tardiness to school shall warrant a warning. Unexcused tardiness thereafter shall warrant the assigning of after school detention.

EXCUSING AN ABSENCE

If the student has a legitimate reason for an absence and wishes to have the absence considered as an excused absence, the student must obtain a REASON FOR ABSENCE form upon return to school, have the parent complete the form and return it within the specified time.

It is the student's responsibility to account for any attendance matter on his own time (class or study time cannot be used). Knowing and abiding by the regulations and procedures governing attendance is a student responsibility.

An abstract of the doctoral dissertation entitled.....

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# THE IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

Joseph Francesco Levanto, Ph.D.

The University of Connecticut, 1973

## The Problem

Many secondary school administrators are openly concerned with rising absenteeism and its implications for curriculum and program development. The problem of increasing absenteeism may soon become the secondary schools' foremost problem. An urgent need for the collection and analysis of attendance data in secondary schools has emerged but no model has been developed to assist in furthering research in this problem area.

## Procedures

The study concerns itself with the design and development of a systematic method for the identification and analysis of factors related to secondary school absenteeism. The procedure developed permits the analysis of mass data that could serve as a basis for subsequent research.

A data collection and data storage systems were designed and implemented for computer processing of massive collections of data extracted from student records. Attendance data, student achievement grades, and personal information on approximately 3,100 students, enrolled in a Connecticut high school in 1971-72, were inputs into a computer system that produced a variety of tables and graphs as output. Graphs were designed to display school patterns of absenteeism, while the tables present absentee and achievement data related to the following factors: class, sex, age, town of residence, parental employment, number of parents living at home, I.Q. scores, programs of study, school activities, race, language spoken at home, religion, class rank, and the student's personality.

## Findings

The following is a summary of the findings that are discussed in detail in Chapter III of the study:

1. Distinquishable patterns of absenteeism are displayed when daily absentee data are graphically plotted. For example, weekly cyclical patterns were apparent, with Wednesdays and Thursdays having the lowest absenteeism, and days of important test and examination reflecting a drop in absenteeism.

2. The boys in the first three years of high school generally have lower rates of absenteeism than girls at the same grade level. Boys in the senior year of high school have a slightly higher rate of absenteeism than girls in the same class.

(continued)

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3. With each succeeding class and age group, from the ninth grade through the twelfth, absenteeism increased.

4. Students who lived with both parents generally had a lower rate of absenteeism than those who lived with one parent or guardian.

5. Students in the college preparatory program generally had the lowest rate of absenteeism followed by students in the business education and the general program respectively.

6. For senior students in the study, absenteeism generally is lowest for students with the highest I.Q. scores.

7. For senior students, absenteeism generally is lowest for students with the highest class ranks in academic achievement.

8. Students who participated in both school sponsored athletic and non-athletic type activities generally have lower rates of absenteeism than those who participate in one or none of these activities.

9. The absentee rate generally was higher for Black students than for White students.

10. Students of the Jewish faith had the lowest rate of absenteeism followed in order by Catholics, other religions, Protestant, and those who reported no religion.

11. The poorer the students' personality rating by teachers, on a scale developed for this study, generally the higher the rate of absenteeism.

Copies of the complete dissertation may be obtained by writing to:

XEROX UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

Title/author: THE IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM, Joseph Francesco Levanto, Ph.D., The University of Connecticut, 1973.